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PART VII.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF KOWEIT.

January to March 1905.

CONFIDENTIAL.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
1	Mr. Townley	..	1 Tel.	Jan. 2, 1905 Ibn Saoud. His act of submission accepted. Departure of troops from Bussorah for Nejd	1
2	India Office	..	..	4, Nejd. Movements of Ibn Rashid. Defeated at Kasr-bui-Agazil with heavy loss by Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud	1
3	Mr. Townley	..	7 Tel.	8, Nejd. Refers to No. 1. Transmits telegram from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, dated the 7th January. Battalion of Turkish troops left Amara for Bagdad, Nejd ultimate destination	2
4	India Office	..	..	11, Ibn Saoud. Transmits copy of telegram to Viceroy, dated the 30th December, 1904. The Sheikh should be warned against entanglements in the interior. His Majesty's Government will reserve right to send Agent to Koweit at their discretion	2
5	" "	..	..	12, (See "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Arabia," Part I. p. 82). ..	2
6	" "	..	..	18, Koweit mail. Suggested fast weekly service to Koweit. Turbine steamers will run from the 1st February, 1905.. ..	3
7	" "	..	..	24, Ibn Saoud. Transmits telegram from Viceroy, dated the 23rd January. Expected arrival of Ibn Saoud at Koweit <i>en route</i> for Safwan. Proposed dispatch of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" to Koweit	3
8	" "	..	..	Mar. 10, Flag for Koweit vessels. Transmits telegram to Viceroy, dated the 1st March. Distinctive flag should be adopted for shipping purposes, present flag to be retained in Koweit itself	4
9	" "	..	..	22, Belgian customs officials. Transmits précis of cases in which they have been guilty of interference with Koweit subjects or property ..	4
10	Sir N. O'Conor	..	185 Confidential	21, Sheikh of Koweit. Attempts of the Sultan to obtain assurances of his loyalty. Accusation of the Vali of Bussorah that the Sheikh is showing leaning towards the English ..	5

Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Koweit.

PART VII.

[All Papers later than 27th March are printed in "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Arabia."]

No. 1.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 2.)

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 2, 1905.

I HAVE received the following telegram from His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, dated the 30th ultimo :

"I have to report that a battalion has left here for Nejd via Bagdad, and that Redifs of the Vilayet of Mosul have been sent to replace it."

The most recent information I have received is to the effect that the Turkish Government have decided upon the dispatch of an expedition against Ibn Saoud, though it had been resolved until a few days ago to accept his act of submission. The above telegram would appear to confirm this information.

No. 2.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 5.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary, Simla, dated the 24th November, 1904, relative to Nejd affairs.

India Office, January 4, 1905.

Inclosure 1 in No. 2.

Political Resident, Persian Gulf, to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.)

Bushire, October 29, 1904.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with Foreign Department letter, dated the 8th instant, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, copy of the inclosed letter which I have received from the Political Agent, Koweit, regarding Nejd affairs.

Inclosure 2 in No. 2.

*Political Agent, Koweit, to Political Resident, Persian Gulf.*Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.)

Koweit, October 17, 1904.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Resident, that I returned to Koweit late in the evening of the 16th instant.

2. In the morning Sheikh Mubarek at once came to visit me, and gave me the following information regarding affairs in Nejd:—

"On the 16th Rajab (27th September) Ibn Rashid broke up his camp at Shanaynah, and began to march. His object is not known, but probably he commenced a retreat towards Hail. In the course of the second day's march, Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud fell upon him at Kasr-bui-Agazil, and the result of the encounter is said to have been an utter rout. 550 Turkish soldiers were killed, and 330 men of Hail and Bin Saoud's men took two days thoroughly to plunder the tents at Kasr-bui-Agazil. Three standards have reached Koweit. Bin Rashid is said to have been severely wounded and riding away from the fight, and his shattered party, such as he could keep together, made their retreat with the following transport:—

" 40 loading camels.
" 12 horses.
" 9 mules."

Sheikh Mubarek says that the few remaining soldiers who did not die in the fighting will in all probability die of hunger and thirst in the desert.

3. This news reached Koweit on the morning of the 15th, and I heard a rough version at Fao the same evening, as I was on the point of starting, but the extreme difficulty of sending confidential telegrams from that place prevented me from sending the news as soon as I could have wished.

4. Sheikh Mubarek concluded his account of what had happened at Nejd with the embarrassing question, "What am I to say to Bin Saoud, who wants to know whether he is to write to the Turks or not about this matter?"

5. I replied that, in the absence of instructions from my Government, neither Mubarek nor I could give any advice to Bin Saoud, who must consult his own interests, and act as he thinks best.

6. This news is evidently believed at Koweit, where there are signs of great rejoicing at Bin Saoud's victory.

No. 3.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 8.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 8, 1905.

NEJD. My telegram No. 1 of the 2nd instant. I have received the following telegram No. 1 from His Majesty's Consular Officer at Bussorah, dated the 7th instant.

"Turkish troops for Nejd. See my telegram No. 70 of the 31st ultimo.

"A further battalion has started from Amara for Bagdad. Nejd is, no doubt, its ultimate destination."

No. 4.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 12.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 30th December, 1904, relative to Koweit affairs.

India Office, January 11, 1905.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Mr. Brodrick to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, December 30, 1904.

PLEASE refer to the telegram of the 26th ultimo from Lord Ampthill regarding Koweit. His Majesty's Government agree that Knox should express no opinion as to the advice to be given to Ibn Saoud by Mubarak, but he should repeat to Sheikh warnings against entanglements in the interior. See paragraph 12 of the despatch from the Viceroy dated the 17th December, 1903.

His Majesty's Government wish it to be clearly understood that their influence and interest are to be strictly confined to the coast-line of Eastern Arabia, and that nothing is to be said or done to connect them, even in an indirect way, with the fighting now going on in the interior.

With regard to temporary withdrawal of our Agent from Koweit, it is not proposed to make this a concession to the Turks, in consideration of reciprocal action on their part, but to reserve absolutely right of His Majesty's Government at their own discretion to send from time to time Agent to Koweit.

No. 5.

India Office to Foreign Office, dated January 12, 1905.

[For this paper, see "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Arabia," Part I, p. 32.]

No. 6.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 19.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of an inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary, Calcutta, dated the 15th December, 1904, relative to the Koweit mail service and telegraphic communication.

India Office, January 18, 1905.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Government of India to Political Resident, Persian Gulf.

Sir,

Fort William, December 10, 1904.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 13th August, 1904, suggesting that the fast mail steamer should call once weekly at Koweit.

2. In reply, I am to inform you that the Director-General, Post Office, India, has been in communication with the Managing Agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company, and has been informed that arrangements have been made for introducing a weekly call at Koweit by the fast mail steamer on the up voyage with effect from the 1st December, 1904.

3. It has further been ascertained that the agents are bringing out turbine steamers to perform the fast mail service to the Persian Gulf, and the first of these steamers has already arrived at Bombay. From the 1st February, 1905, or possibly from an earlier date, they propose to introduce a still further improved service in excess of the requirements of the present contract, by which the mail transit from Bombay to Bussorah and back will be reduced from three weeks to two weeks, and the weekly call on the up voyage at Koweit will be retained when this accelerated service is introduced.

4. The question of the telegraph extension to Koweit, raised in the same reference under reply, is under consideration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. SOMERS COCKS,
Assistant Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 7.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 24.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 23rd January, relative to Koweit and Nejd.

India Office, January 24, 1905.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Government of India to Mr. Brodrick.

(Telegraphic.) P.

January 23, 1905.

POLITICAL RESIDENT in Persian Gulf telegraphs, on the 17th instant, as follows regarding affairs in Nejd and Koweit:—

"Report of to-day's date received from Knox states that arrival of Ibn Saud at or in the neighbourhood of Koweit, on his way to Safwan (where he is to meet the Vali of Bussorah) is now imminent. It is also stipulated that Mubarak shall be present, and the latter is making preparations to proceed to the rendezvous, taking with him, as a measure of precaution, a formidable escort 1,000 strong. This important event is significant, because expediency of extending British protection to Ibn Saud and Nejd has been repeatedly impressed upon Knox by Mubarak, who represents that such a measure, besides being earnestly desired by himself and his friends before mentioned, is one failing which Ibn Saud will have no alternative but to allow the Turks admittance into Nejd. At the same time, but in a separate communication, Mubarak stated that he considered he ought to be subsidized by the British Government for his services. Impression conveyed by all this is that the present opportunity is being utilized both by Mubarak and Ibn Saud to work on our feelings. Knox, however, has maintained a guarded and discreet attitude. No doubt the Turks will do their utmost at the forthcoming Conference to seduce Mubarak. Probability is that he will not waver, but I should be glad to be informed whether I may ask for His Majesty's ship 'Sphinx,' which is available, to proceed to Koweit until required at Bahrein. Knowledge that a British man-of-war is present at Koweit while the Conference with the Vali is proceeding might serve to give confidence to Mubarak or else might prove a useful deterrent. I should also be glad to know whether the Government of India have any special instructions for Knox in case it should be found impossible for a meeting between him and Ibn Saud to be avoided. Meeting will not be sought by Knox."

I have authorized Resident to ask for dispatch of His Majesty's ship "Sphinx" to Koweit, as he proposes, and I have referred him to your telegram of the 30th December for his guidance. I have also given instructions that, unless, of course, Ibn Saud actually visits Koweit, no meeting or communication with him is to take place.

No. 8.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 11.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 1st March, relative to the proposed distinctive flag for Koweit vessels.

India Office, March 10, 1905.

Inclosure in No. 8.

Mr. Brodrick to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, March 1, 1905.

KOWEIT. Recommendation which it is proposed in paragraph 7 of your letter of the 8th December, 1904, should be made to Sheikh—viz., adoption of distinctive colours for shipping purposes, but retention of the present flag for use in Koweit itself—is approved by His Majesty's Government.

No. 9.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 23.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Brodrick, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary, Calcutta, dated the 23rd February, relative to Koweit affairs.

India Office, March 22, 1905.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, January 14, 1905.

IN continuation of this Office telegram, dated the 22nd September, and with reference to the communications from the Foreign Department detailed in the margin,* I have the honour to submit details of those cases of interference by Belgian customs officials with Koweit subjects or property, which are up to now unsettled or may be regarded as still being a source of irritation at Koweit.

2. I am as yet unable to report further regarding the incident which recently took place at Fao, in which the Agent for the care of Sheikh Mubarek's property there was involved, as His Britannic Majesty's Consul has not been able to conclude the further investigation and report which I am expecting from him. The Political Agent at Koweit has at the same time been away in camp in co-operation with Mr. J. G. Lorimer, so that he has not been available for obtaining further information.

3. I now append separate précis of the detailed facts of six cases, numbered respectively (a), (b), (c), (d), (f), and (g). The first four of these have already been briefly dealt with in paragraph 2 of despatch dated the 8th December, from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, of which a copy was forwarded to me under Foreign Department indorsement.

I will briefly comment on the items in detail:—

(a.) This case was mentioned to Government incidentally in this Office letter of the 2nd July, 1904, and remains *in statu quo*, the Customs having refused to refund the fine imposed.

In reference to it Sheikh Mubarek addressed me a long complaint, in the course of which he wrote:—

"We cannot endure this treatment, and your sense of what is right will surely not permit that those who are under your protection shall suffer in this way. If you afford us relief your will do us honour, and for such actions your great Government is noted. If you neglect to do so, and if this tyranny is not put a stop to, then we must seek some other state of things which will relieve us of it. At present all my subjects who travel for trade are in a state of terror."

* Dated January 9, and December 1 and 15, 1904.

I had to inform the Sheikh on the 6th July that the Customs had refused to comply with my representations, and that I was still not unmindful of the matter, but had had to report it to the Government of India for orders.

(b.) This case was only just alluded to in paragraph 3 of my letter before mentioned, and was reported to be "still under correspondence." Its further developments have been most unsatisfactory, and have resulted in much hardship to the nakhoda of the dhow in question, who appears to deserve substantial compensation, both for the loss of his goods and for the harassing protraction of his case over a period of six months.

(c.) Requires no special comment here, as the Government of India have already expressed their opinion on it, and there has since been no further development.

(d.) The same remarks apply to this case also, which is at present under reference to the Persian Government.

(e.) This is the case of the pilot Khalid. I last addressed the Government of India on the subject in this Office letter dated the 13th August.

The Persian Government having been silent on the matter for some five months, I thought that on receiving their Karguzar's report they had wisely decided to let the matter die a natural death. Such probably was the case. But realizing, perhaps, from Reuter's telegram of the 13th November, regarding the withdrawal of our Agent at Koweit, that we were not prepared to take up a strong position in regard to Sheikh Mubarek, they have, within the last few days, begun to interest themselves again in the case. I hope, however, that I may be able to settle it locally with the Karguzar without the necessity of troubling higher authority with it again.

(f.) This is the case to which the Government of India have alluded at the end of paragraph 6 of their despatch above mentioned, and have decided not to press it. I am not sure, however, whether, when they arrived at this decision, this Office letter, dated the 20th November, had been considered.

It is common report at Mohammerah and Bussorah, that these twenty-eight rifles were intended for the Nakib of Bussorah, but I quite understand the difficulty of pressing a case in which the arms, even if not bound for Persia, were evidently being smuggled. It will be noted, however, from the précis of the case appended, and from Captain Trevor's observations at the end of paragraph 3 of his letter, that there were also innocent goods on board belonging to Bahrein and Koweit subjects, who had shipped them in the ordinary way, and that these have been included in the confiscation.

The case of these unoffending persons seems to deserve independent consideration, and the principle governing the seizure of their merchandize has been referred to His Majesty's Ministry at Tehran, whose decision is awaited.

Foreign Department telegram, dated the 15th December, 1904, regarding the boundaries of jurisdiction on the Shatt-el-Arab, refers to this case. I still await information on this point from His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, who, I think, has been away from head-quarters. I have sent him a reminder on the subject.

Mr. McDonall writes, from a Mohammerah point of view, that there appears to be nothing definitely laid down, but that in practice Sheikh Khazzal accepts the view that the deep channel used by the largest steamers represents the dividing line of jurisdiction.

I will report separately on this question as soon as all available material is to hand.

(g.) Alleged confiscation of some merchandize belonging to a Koweit subject from a Persian dhow.

This case has not hitherto been reported to Government, and at present sufficiently strong evidence has not been obtained to make it any use approaching the customs in the matter, or to ask the Government of India to take any action in regard thereto.

4. Apart from the cases of Koweit subjects with the Persian Customs, and reverting to the original inquiry made in the telegram from Foreign with Viceroy, dated the 1st December, I am led to believe that Sheikh Mubarek is, generally speaking, a good deal aggrieved by alleged oppression of Koweit dhows in matters of quarantine at Bussorah, but until I receive details from the Political Agent at Koweit on his return from camp I am not in a position to submit a satisfactory report in this connection, and beg leave to postpone it. I believe that this grievance is not a very pressing one at the present time.

CASE (a).

Seizure of a Koweit dhow, owned by Yusuf and Abdulla-bin-Abdul Kader, by the Steam-ship "Muzaffer," March 1904.

In March 1904 the Residency Agent, Lingah, reported that the Persian Customs revenue steamer "Muzaffer" had brought in tow a boat under Turkish colours which she had overtaken opposite Chiroo; that the boat belonged to the Koweit subjects above mentioned, and was commanded by nakhoda Rashid-bin-Freh; that she had shipped "chandals" (rafters) at Kuran (on the Island of Kishm) for Koweit; that as the nakhoda could not produce a Customs pass for the chandals the Director of Customs, who was on board the "Muzaffer," wished to search the boat for contraband; that finding it inconvenient to carry out a search in the open sea, the Director had ordered the vessel to be taken in tow in spite of the protests of the nakhoda, who had nothing contraband on board; that on arrival at Lingah the boat was searched, and, in spite of the fact that no contraband articles were found on board, the nakhoda was fined 100 tomans, ostensibly for not possessing the Customs papers for his cargo; the nakhoda stated that the papers were with the owner of the cargo at Kishm, and wrote to him for the same. He then applied to the Turkish Consular Agent for assistance, and the latter approached the Director-General, but without success, so that in order to avoid unlimited detention the nakhoda paid 100 tomans and eventually got his boat released. The papers were ultimately produced, and the fine was reduced to 25 tomans.

The Chief of Koweit, who had meanwhile been petitioned by the nakhoda, addressed the Resident on the 31st March, 1904, strongly protesting against the action of the Belgian Customs Administration.

The Director-General was then addressed on the subject, and in reply declared that the vessel was seized between the Island of Keis and the mainland, and that she was fined 25 tomans, as the nakhoda did not possess the necessary Customs documents.

As it was not known whether the vessel was seized within the 3-mile limit or not, inquiries were made both from Sheikh Mubarek and the Director-General. The former insisted that the boat was seized at sea out of sight of land, whereas the latter stated that it was overtaken in latitude 20° 40' 30" north, longitude 54° 7' east, between the Island of Keis and the mainland. The Director-General refused to refund the fine.

The Resident had then to inform the Sheikh of Koweit that the Director of Customs had refused to yield in any way to our representations, and that the case was therefore being represented to the Government of India. Mention of it was included in the Resident's letter No. 203, dated the 2nd July, 1904, to the address of the Foreign Secretary.

CASE (b).

Detention of Koweit dhow of Nakhoda Mubarak-bin-Khalifa at Shivoh.

Seizure of twenty bags of wheat and the jolly boat of the vessel, which has since been destroyed while in hands of Customs, May and June, 1904.

This dhow, which is the property of a Koweit subject named Yusuf-bin-Munis, left Koweit with a cargo of dates and wheat on or about the 14th May, 1904.

On arrival at Shivoh (near Lingah), the first port at which we called, the Customs Mudir there demanded of the nakhoda a Customs pass for his cargo. The nakhoda explained that as he came from Koweit he possessed no such paper, but that he held a certificate from Sheikh Mubarek to the effect that both dhow and cargo were from Koweit. The Mudir refused to accept this, and declared that the wheat was doubtless fraudulently shipped from some Persian port, and accordingly seized twenty bags of it. After detaining the boat for about five days the Mudir gave the nakhoda a letter on the Customs Director at Lingah; the nakhoda carried this to the addressee, who took the same view as his subordinate at Shivoh, and added that the vessel must await the decision of the Customs Inspector, who was expected to arrive shortly;

or, if the nakhoda did not choose to wait, must land all his cargo. After a couple of days the Inspector arrived, and declined to acknowledge the authenticity of the Sheikh's letter, told the nakhoda that he would refer the matter to Bushire, and that pending orders from there he and his vessel would be detained.

The nakhoda, finding that, although he had been detained about three weeks he had failed to get any definite reply, and being unable to afford to waste any more time lest he should lose his chance of selling his dates, left the twenty bags at the custom-house, and sailed for the Arab coast to dispose of the rest of his cargo, which he found was rotting. At the same time he sent a Petition, representing the matter to Sheikh Mubarek. The latter, on receiving the nakhoda's complaint, wrote to this Residency under date the 22nd June, protesting against the action of the Customs authorities, and inclosing a Customs jowaz obtained from the Persian port of Mashoor, whence the wheat had been originally imported into Koweit.

The Director-General of Customs was addressed on the subject by this Residency, and was asked to state on what grounds the wheat had been confiscated, and whether he could see his way to release it. In reply, the Director-General stated that he was writing to Lingah for particulars. He subsequently wrote on the 16th July that as the nakhoda had declared that the wheat had been shipped at a Persian port, but had failed to produce the necessary Customs pass, twenty bags of wheat had been taken charge of as a security pending production of the necessary papers; that before the matter had been definitely settled the nakhoda had left in his dhow without giving any notice, and that therefore he had directed the sub-officer to seize the nakhoda on his arrival. He concluded by inquiring whether he was bound to furnish any explanation to the Residency on behalf of Koweit subjects. He was informed that as the nakhoda was a Koweit subject, the Resident considered he was entitled to give the man his Consular good offices.

About the same time the Government of India were addressed with a view to ascertaining how far British protection was to be extended to Koweit subjects, and it was suggested that the Chief of Koweit might be advised to use a distinctive flag for Koweit boats.

Meanwhile, on the 5th July the Residency Agent at Lingah reported that the dhow in question had been seized with her nakhoda at Mokam by the Customs authorities. The nakhoda was subsequently released through the intervention of the Zabit of Mokam and left in his boom for Koweit, but his jolly-boat was detained.

After a good deal of correspondence, M. Waffelaert ultimately wrote that in view of a promise he had made to the Resident, he was "prepared to be completely lenient towards the above nakhoda, and, as an exceptional case, release the twenty bags of wheat in question," and that they were at the disposal of the owner. He appeared to be under an impression that the nakhoda's jolly-boat had been restored to him. This, however, on reference to Lingah proved to be incorrect, and the jolly-boat was found to have been wrecked while under detention of the Customs at Mokam.

This case had now dragged on till the end of November, and on the 3rd December the question of compensation for the loss of the jolly-boat was broached to the Director-General, but he replied on the 7th December refusing to entertain it, and declined to correspond further with the Residency in regard to Koweit subjects.

The bags of wheat have not yet been taken over by the owner, and are no doubt spoilt long ere this, so that the owner has lost both his jolly-boat and his twenty bags of wheat. Probable value in all about 300 rupees.

CASE (c).

Detention and Search of a dhow belonging to Sheikh Mubarek of Koweit, named the "Muselim," September 1904.

Sheikh Mubarek having heard that his boat named "Muselim," which habitually plies between Koweit and Fao on his own business, had been stopped, detained, and searched by a boat from the Persian Customs steamer "Muzaffer," about the middle of September 1904, wrote to the Political Agent, Koweit, strongly protesting against the action of the "Muzaffer." The Political Agent, in forwarding the Sheikh's complaint, stated that the feeling in Koweit itself was very bitter against the Belgian officials of the Persian Customs, owing to this incident and the seizure of Koweit boats in the Shatt-el-Arab, and might lead to retaliation. He also stated that the men from

the "Muzaffer" were in the habit of firing ball cartridges at random when stopping a boat, and had done so in this case.

The case was represented to the Director-General of Customs, Bushire, who, after some letters had been exchanged with this Office, replied, under date the 3rd November, 1904, that the "Muzaffer" "has detained many 'booms and bellums,' but has never kept them longer than it was necessary for searching the inside of the craft." He added that "the Commander of our boat does not recollect anything particular about the boom 'Muselim,' but the mere fact of the crew shouting out that the vessel belonged to Sheikh Mubarek was not sufficient to prove that the boat did not carry contraband goods."

No satisfaction was obtained, and the matter was, therefore, reported to the Government of India in this Office letter of the 20th November, 1904.

CASE (d).

Detention of the Koweit dhow "Teysir" by the Steam-ship "Muzaffer" in the Shatt-el-Arab. Seizure of arms found in her and imposition of fine on her Nakhoda, September 1904.

News reached Bushire from Mohammerah in the middle of September 1904, that the Persian Customs steamer "Muzaffer" had been searching all sailing vessels going up the Shatt-el-Arab for arms, without reference to the Chief of Mohammerah in whose jurisdiction the operations were conducted. The Chief was greatly exercised at these proceedings, and sent a complaint to the Persian Minister of the Interior.

On the 23rd September His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah, reported that His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Bussorah, had sent to him the owner of a Koweit boat named "Teysir," nakhoda Ali-bin-Muhammed Mubarak, which had been seized by the "Muzaffer" for having 12 rifles and 1,200 cartridges on board.

The owner stated that the vessel was bound for Sibiliyat, near Bussorah, to load dates, and the arms and ammunition had been taken on board at Koweit for protection against pirates in the Shatt-el-Arab and the villages between Ras-el-Had and Fartag; that the arms had not been concealed; that the vessel had no intention of communicating with Persian territory; that while she was tacking up the river off the Turkish fort at Fao, she met boats from the "Muzaffer" and was seized.

On His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah, representing the case to the Director-General of Customs, he stated that the rifles were concealed and new, with full complement of cartridges, and that as the importation of arms was prohibited in Turkey as well as Persia, it was immaterial whither they were bound.

He suggested that, as it would take some time to settle the case and a reference would have to be made to Tehran, the owner may pay a fine of double the value of the rifles under protest and get his vessel released. The owner, under the advice of the Consul, adopted the suggested course and paid 8,000 krans.

Sheikh Mubarak, on hearing of the proceedings of the "Muzaffer," made a complaint to the Resident through the Political Agent, Koweit, and the matter is before the Government of India, who are in communication with His Majesty's Legation, Tehran. The Wali of Bussorah has protested to the Persian Government against Persian gun-boats stopping and searching vessels in the Shatt-el-Arab proceeding to Bussorah.

The Government of India decided (*vide* telegram dated the 28th November, 1904) to represent the case to the Persian Government on the grounds that the arms were evidently for the defence of the dhow.

Still pending.

CASE (f).

Seizure of a Koweit dhow, Nakhoda Ghanum, by the Steam-ship "Muzaffer" in the Shatt-el-Arab, for having twenty-eight rifles on board. Subsequent confiscation of dhow and imprisonment of Nakhoda and confiscation of innocent goods, September 1904.

About the middle of September 1904 the Persian Customs steamer "Muzaffer," while searching sailing vessels for arms near the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab, came

across a Koweit boat commanded by nakhoda Ghanum, and seized it for having twenty-eight rifles concealed on board.

She was brought up to Mohammerah, where the Director of Customs offered to release her on receiving a fine of 18,000 krans, which he said could be paid under protest. As the fine demanded was more than the value of the boat, which was, moreover, mortgaged, the owner could not accept the terms.

The Director-General of Customs, Arabistan, then wired to the Director-General of Customs, Bushire, who went up to Mohammerah in the Persian gun-boat "Persepolis" and brought the Koweit boat in tow to Bushire, the "Muzaffer" following.

At Bushire nakhoda Ghanum was at first placed under ordinary detention, but later on consigned to a room in the Government House set apart for prisoners. He was then approached by a Customs representative with a suggestion that, if he signed a paper making over his boat to the Customs, he would be released. Before complying with the suggestion, he communicated with the Residency through his head priest and was advised not to do so pending receipt of a reply to a reference which was being made to the Government of India (*vide* Captain Trevor's telegram dated the 11th November, 1904).

Meanwhile, on the 12th November, orders were received by the local Customs authorities to definitely confiscate the boat, together with all her cargo, and confine the nakhoda pending payment of the fine.

The dhow was put up to auction on the 26th November, but no buyer came forward, and she still remains unsold. The nakhoda was released, as nothing more could be got out of him, and returned to Koweit on the 7th December.

Four bundles canvas and some skins belonging to Bahrein and Koweit subjects, which were shipped quite innocently in this boat for Bussorah, were confiscated and sold for the benefit of the Persian Government, the endeavours of this Residency to get the Director-General of Customs to release them proving unavailing. The case was reported to the Government of India in this Office letter dated the 20th November, 1904.

CASE (g).

Alleged confiscation of goods belonging to a Koweit subject, Yusuf-el-Haris, found in Persian dhow, August 1904.

In August 1904 the Chief of Koweit sent to the Resident a complaint from Yusuf-el-Haris, one of his subjects, to the effect that the Persian Customs revenue steamer "Muzaffer" overtook a Persian sailing vessel off Maghoo (near Lingah) which had among her cargo twenty cases vermicelli, and one case containing seventeen compasses and six yards broad-cloth on board for him; examined the vessel's cargo; demanded a Customs pass, which not being forthcoming, one case vermicelli and the case of compasses and broad-cloth were removed from her. Yusuf stated that the goods were consigned to him from Karachi in a Bahrein boat, and were to be transhipped at Bahrein for Koweit, but that on the nakhoda of the Bahrein boat finding near Basidu a Persian boat bound for Koweit, they were transhipped to her at sea. It was after this transhipment that the "Muzaffer" met the boat bound for Koweit. The nakhoda of this dhow is a resident of Koweit, but a Persian subject, as also were the crew.

On the matter being represented by the Residency to the Director-General of Customs, Bushire, he replied as follows:—

"On the 1st July last, on our way to Cherek, we came across a big boat flying the Persian flag. Having stopped the boat we learned that it belonged to Haji Mahomed Dilomy. From the statements which Khalifa-bin-Abdulla, the nephew of the said Haji Mahomed, made in reply to my questions, it resulted that the boat came from Kharmir, a Persian port, near Bunder Abbas, where she had been to sell her cargo of wheat and barley. The nakhoda declared now to have on board twenty cases vermicelli and thirteen bags dried beans shipped at Khamir for Dilom. In searching the boat we found the statement regarding the quantity of the goods correct. To my demand to produce the Customs "cabotage jowaz," the nakhoda replied that the documents were sent to Dilom by post. This kind of proceeding appearing to me very

strange, I demanded that two cases vermicelli and one bag beans should be deposited as a guarantee with us, and to be released on presentation of the necessary documents. As to the box of seventeen compasses and six yards broad-cloth, we did not see any of them on board the said boat."

The above answer was communicated to the Political Agent, Koweit, who informed Sheikh Mubarek of it. Sheikh Mubarek thereupon sent the nakhoda of the vessel and Yusuf-el-Haris to the Political Agent, who took down their statements. The nakhoda declared that the "Muzaffer" confiscated the boxes containing vermicelli, broad-cloth, and compasses, but his unsupported statement alone will not be accepted by the Customs, and although endeavours have since been made to obtain corroboration from the crew of the vessel and from the nakhoda of the Bahrein vessel from which the goods were transhipped, so far we have been unable to find them, and Yusuf-el-Haris was not himself present when the goods were transhipped.

No. 10.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 185. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, March 21, 1905.

I LEARN confidentially that the Sultan has been endeavouring to obtain assurances from the Sheikh of Koweit of his loyalty and unwavering fidelity. The Sheikh appears to have given an evasive reply, and he is accused by the Vali of Bussorah of endeavouring to win over certain Arab tribes to his side and to show leanings towards the English, as manifested by his allowing them to open a post office in his town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.